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Morale and Discipline Problems in the Soviet Armed Forces

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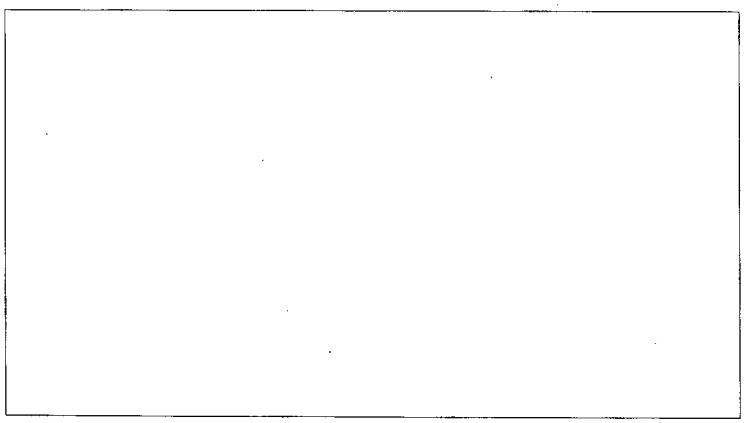

Morale and Discipline Problems in the Soviet Armed Forces

Central Intelligence Agency
Directorate of Intelligence

April 1977

SUMMARY

The Soviet high command is increasingly concerned about morale and discipline in the armed forces. Continuing problems prompted a flurry of high-level meetings in July 1976. A mutiny aboard a Baltic Fleet destroyer in November 1975 and the defection last year of a pilot in a MIG-25 Foxbat interceptor dramatize the reasons for Soviet concern.

The indifference of junior and middle-ranking Soviet officers has repeatedly been blamed for persistent morale and discipline problems, although the ineffectiveness of authorized punishments leads some officers to exceed their powers in trying to maintain discipline. The propensity of senior Soviet officers to intervene freely when they learn of discipline violations further reduces the initiative of lower ranking officers, who often cover up such problems to protect their careers. At all levels Soviet officers tend to ignore discipline problems when performance seems unimpaired. New Defense Minister D. F. Ustinov, however, has made overcoming this bureaucratic inertia one of his initial priorities.

Chronic morale and discipline problems include:

— *political disaffection*, of uncertain extent in the Soviet military, but of increasing concern after the 1975 mutiny

— *insubordination* of enlisted men to junior officers and NCOs

— *drunkenness*, a perennial feature of Soviet military life, and linked to one-third of all disciplinary violations, according to the chief military prosecutor

— *desertion*, uncertain in scale, but apparently a serious problem involving a significant number of officers

— *suicides*, which appear markedly higher in the Soviet military than among the civilian population

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Comments and queries regarding this memorandum are welcome. They may be directed to [redacted] *of the Strategic Evaluation Center, Office of Strategic Research,* [redacted]

— *black markets, corruption, thefts, and abuse of authority,* endemic in the Soviet military as in civil life and contributing to mutual distrust among officers and enlisted men.

Despite greater high-level concern, the Soviet military's ability to deal with morale and discipline problems remains uncertain. Many of these problems are deeply rooted in Soviet society. Even if the Soviet command devises better ways to improve morale and prevent violations of discipline, the indifference of many Soviet officers will preclude uniform application of any solution.

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PREFACE

Mutiny aboard a Soviet destroyer in November 1975 stirred interest in the morale and discipline of the Soviet armed forces. This memorandum examines Soviet problems in this area.

The problems cited in this paper almost certainly affect the competence of the armed forces and the confidence of Soviet leaders in them. The reader should be cautious, however, in drawing conclusions about the overall effectiveness of the forces. The relationship between morale, discipline, and effectiveness is murky. Discipline is a set of rules intended to enforce standards of effectiveness, but the rules may be poorly designed for their purpose, and violations of discipline may not impair effectiveness. Morale is a set of attitudes, both of individual soldiers and of their aggregate, which influences the degree of compliance with discipline and attainment of effectiveness. The problem in interpreting any bit of information on the morale of a soldier or of his unit is that while his morale may contribute to effectiveness, it may also induce disregard for discipline. While morale and discipline influence effectiveness, no simple causal association holds between them.

A second caution against drawing conclusions about effectiveness from this memorandum inheres in the data. Numerous cases are cited, but these are primarily accounts of single discipline violations or of an individual's morale. To project proportions or trends from such fragmentary information is hazardous. While the extent of suicide and alcoholism can be indicated with some confidence, the extent of other problems is either unknown or known only tentatively.

Sources of information include the Soviet press [redacted] Soviet press articles are relatively trustworthy because they record official Soviet investigations of disciplinary problems. [redacted]

Morale and Discipline Problems in the Soviet Armed Forces

The Soviet View of Morale and Discipline

The Soviet military press recently has contained indications of top-level concern about morale and discipline in the armed forces. An early sign of this concern was the issuance of revised military regulations in the spring of 1975. In addition, a propaganda campaign beginning in the fall of that year addressed important disciplinary problems such as mismanagement of guardhouses and inadequate security for arms.

A further sign of Soviet concern surfaced in the journal *Soviet State and Law* for February 1976. The article, written by the deputy chief military prosecutor and a civilian official, asserted that "it is also very important to overcome the nihilistic attitude that exists among a certain section of the youth . . . toward performance of service in the army." This article was an unusual public reference to a problem that senior Soviet officers have privately acknowledged for some time—conscripts' lack of dedication.

In 1967 Soviet Chief of Staff V. G. Kulikov, then commanding the Group of Soviet Forces in Germany, said that one of the reasons for the reduction in that year of the conscription term was that contemporary youths had become unwilling to serve for 3 years and more. In 1973 Marshal K. S. Moskalenko, chief inspector of the Soviet Armed Forces, told a West German businessman in Moscow that Soviet conscripts' abuse of drugs and insubordination to officers had increased to worrisome proportions. At about the same time, Yuri N. Listvinov, chief of the Political-Military Department at the Institute of World Economy and International Relations and a former military officer, privately echoed Moskalenko: young recruits were rejecting discipline and morale was declining.[1]

Beginning with a speech by the late Minister of Defense Marshal A. A. Grechko in March 1976, the Soviets may have shifted the blame for disciplinary problems from conscripts to the officer corps. Possibly at the instigation of the Politburo, Grechko's speech attacked unnamed officers for leniency toward "deficiencies and their instigators." Grechko's successor, Marshal D. F. Ustinov, continued this theme when he addressed a "scientific-practical conference of leading political workers" on 7 July. Ustinov called attention to conscript inexperience, rather than negative attitude, as the primary cause of morale and discipline problems. "No small part of the youth is drafted

[1] The Soviets' concern about conscripts' morale is reinforced by their consciousness of morale factors in calculating force effectiveness comparisons. For example, the regulations for determining how many rounds of artillery fire will be necessary to suppress an untried unit of a given size specify coefficients to be applied to the standard number of rounds according to the nationality of the unit under fire. The Bundeswehr is rated at 1.0, the US Army at 0.85, and the Italians at 0.25. In other words, the Soviets expect that only a quarter as many rounds would be needed to disorganize an Italian unit as a West German one, because of the former's lower morale.

A recent publication by two Soviet officers admitted that no precise quantitative indicators of morale had yet been developed but said that the problem was being researched. (See Major General V. K. Korovkin and Lieutenant Colonel I. N. Lyanenko, "On Quantitative Evaluation of the Morale-Psychological Factor," *Military Thought*, April 1976.) Application of any results of this research, however, is likely to be hampered by resistance from traditionalist political officers such as Major General S. K. Il'in, who noted in the May issue of *Military Thought* that "the given problem is only in the very beginning stage of scientific development, and it will hardly ever be fully solved. Therefore, for the evaluation of the status of the moral spirit of the troops, besides the application of computers, it is necessary to make maximal use of traditional forms and methods that have justified themselves."

directly from the school bench," Ustinov said, according to an account in *Red Star*, "and it is not easy for them to take up the burdens of military labor." In contrast, Ustinov deplored "deficiencies in party spirit" among officers.

Ustinov's speech touched off a spate of meetings and articles critical of Soviet officers. The chiefs of the Main Staff and Political Directorate of the Ground Forces lectured senior officers on improving their leadership abilities. On 21 July 1976, *Red Star* reported a meeting of officers of the Central Asian Military District at which the chief of the political directorate discussed implementation of the revised disciplinary regulations. The topic for his speech apparently had been chosen by senior commanders and its content previously approved by them. In addition, an October meeting of political officers, addressed by the Main Political Directorate's deputy chief for agitation and propaganda, reportedly dealt with the subject of morale and discipline problems. (This report is credible because lower echelon meetings addressed by his subordinates have concerned these problems, according to the Soviet press.) Two days after the deputy chief's speech, *Red Star* published an article of unusual specificity by the chief military prosecutor attacking common weaknesses in officer performance. Disciplinary problems among Strategic Rocket Forces personnel in the Siberian Military District were serious enough to occasion a highly unusual appearance by SRF commander Army General V. F. Tolubko at the annual party conference of officers assigned to that district's headquarters.

Top-level disquiet about morale and discipline contrasts with Soviet propaganda's depiction of the armed forces. According to one Soviet journal:

> Soviet military discipline is founded not on fear of punishment or coercion but on the troops' high political conscience, boundless loyalty to the homeland, and profound sense of patriotic and military duty.

Shared class origins of Soviet officers and men purportedly reinforce this voluntary discipline, precluding the class antagonism said to plague Western armies. The proletarian unity of Soviet peoples is also said to have abolished ethnic discord. A book ostensibly written by the late Soviet Minister of Defense, Marshal A. A. Grechko, states:

> The Soviet Army and Navy incarnate the best features of the Soviet people—their unity, morale, political solidarity, and socialist patriotism and internationalism.

Yet even Soviet literature admits that such precepts are more ideal than real. "Measures of indoctrination" are conceded to still need the supplement of "measures of enforcement." *Red Star* criticized a captain who, far from demonstrating class solidarity with his men, did not even take an interest in the condition of their quarters. Grechko's book admits that "ethnic conceit and ethnocentrism" mar personal relations among soldiers and hints that some commanders show disrespect for the customs of minority soldiers.

In the midst of the propaganda campaign about the revised disciplinary regulations, a spectacular demonstration of the failure of Soviet discipline to maintain political dedication occurred. The crew of a destroyer in the Baltic Fleet mutinied.

Mutiny

Mutiny erupted aboard the Soviet destroyer *Storozhevoy* on the night of 8-9 November 1975. A Krivak-class missile destroyer of the Soviet Navy's most modern type, the *Storozhevoy* was then stationed in the Baltic port of Riga.

According to rumor in Riga, the mutiny flared when brawling broke out between enlisted men and officers after the latter tried to end a party celebrating the October Revolution. Most of the ship's officers sided with the men. When the captain refused to join the mutineers, the political officer reportedly led the escape attempt. His defection to the mutineers may have capped a longstanding dereliction. His duty was to identify political unreliables aboard the *Storozhevoy* to the Baltic Fleet political section, which could have detained the ship and removed untrustworthy crewmen. Failure to use this authority made the escape attempt possible and suggests that the political officer did not report the ship's problems.

Nevertheless, both the Baltic Fleet command and naval headquarters in Moscow had known for at least 10 months about political apathy aboard the *Storozhevoy*. In December 1974, *Red Star* criticized the ship's officers because "some comrades have fallen down on the moral front and have taken a liberal approach to the struggle for purity of heart." Higher commands may not have cared, however, for according to the article the *Storozhevoy* was rated as one of the Baltic Fleet's most proficient ships.

The December article in *Red Star* gave an example of the failure of the *Storozhevoy's* officers to maintain discipline. One sailor returning from a sentence to the guardhouse had received a warm welcome from his

fellows. *Red Star's* correspondent thought his welcome unfortunate:

> It is true that the sailor who had slipped behind in his service should have had the attention of the collective. But how? Clapping him on the shoulder does not help. He was returning from being under arrest. And, having arrived on deck, he should have said to his colleagues, "Comrades, I stand guilty before you. But I ask you to trust . . ." And then to show by diligent service that he was not trusted in vain.

The *Storozhevoy's* sailors disdained military discipline, according to *Red Star*. The political officer apparently identified more strongly with his regular counterparts than with the Communist Party apparatus. The naval command may have preferred proficiency to political zeal. It is not known how widespread these conditions are in the Soviet military, but whenever they all exist simultaneously a repeat of the *Storozhevoy* mutiny remains a possibility.

Political Disaffection

Open dissent among Soviet civilian intellectuals has resonated in the military. In 1969 Soviet authorities reportedly arrested three naval officers in Tallinn, Estonian SSR, for joining local civilians in a "Union of Fighters for Political Freedom." Like the *Storozhevoy* mutineers, these officers belonged to the Baltic Fleet. Later, Soviet security made related arrests among students at three commissioning schools who had formed "secret groups to investigate whether the armed forces agree with the wrong policy followed by the Party Central Committee and government." One explanation for military participation in dissident movements may be the historical tie between military officers and intelligentsia in Russian society.

Political disaffection can also stem from stationing a largely Slavic officer corps in areas primarily inhabited by non-Slavic minorities. In these areas the officer encounters strong regional nationalisms that contradict the official concept of unity of all Soviet peoples. The contrast between the officer's presuppositions and his experience can make him reexamine his loyalties. Most officers probably end by reaffirming their loyalty to the Slav-dominated Soviet state, but others lose their commitment. This explanation would account for the cooperation of three Russian officers in Tallinn with local Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian dissidents.

The invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 demonstrated the effects which personal experiences can have on political commitment. One officer wrote to *Red Star* of doubts caused by the Czechoslovaks' "personal unpleasantness, resentments, and adversities." It was rumored that the soldiers of a Soviet unit in Mlada Boleslav even petitioned to be withdrawn from Czechoslovakia as a result of popular hostility.

Soviet enlisted men are, however, less subject to these pressures than officers. Restricted to garrison during off-duty hours, except for rare group excursions, enlisted men in Eastern Europe come into contact with local populations primarily in controlled settings such as the annual Army Day open house.[2] Even inside the Soviet Union enlisted men have few opportunities to mingle with local people except on organized occasions such as joint political lectures. Policy regarding passes forbids more than a third of a unit to be absent at any time, and passes are restricted to Saturday or Sunday. Although sometimes breached by absences without leave, these policies protect enlisted men from pressures which may induce political doubts in some officers.

While exposure to other nationalisms may disaffect a Soviet officer, it can also elicit a chauvinistic reaction. According to a former cadet [redacted] he banded together with fellow students in a so-called cadet league to protect Russian cadets from abuse by non-Slavs. His membership in the league was discovered, and he was expelled from the commissioning school, but the failure to punish him more severely may indicate that other Russian officers concurred with the league's purpose.

Ethnic Hostilities

The Soviet command intentionally mans its units with soldiers from a variety of the more than 90 ethnic communities in the Soviet population. The policy of dispersing ethnic minorities in the armed forces is partly intended to foster a national Soviet identity transcending ethnic loyalties. Dispersion precludes ethnically homogeneous units which, in a crisis, might prove more loyal to their ethnic compatriots than to the central government. The policy also results from some ethnic minorities' relative lack of education, which disqualifies them from specialist positions and consequently precludes filling the table of organiza-

[2] Soviet fears of too much contact between occupation troops and occupied peoples may be founded on experience. In 1956 some Soviet units stationed in Budapest, Hungary, intervened on the side of the Hungarian rebels against the Hungarian secret police. The troops which eventually crushed the rebellion were brought in from outside Hungary.

tion with persons of a single ethnic origin. The Soviet military has no alternative to ethnic integration of its units, despite the side effect of increased ethnic strife.

Soldiers from the Moslem minorities of Central Asia and the Caucasus are primary targets of ethnic tension because of other soldiers' racism, their own lack of education and inability to speak Russian, and contradictory ways of life.

Probably the main cause of ethnic tension involving Central Asians is the blatant prejudice of Slavic and other servicemen. Central Asians are commonly called *chernozhopy*—"black asses." Emigres often describe them as shiftless, stupid, and brutal. Such descriptions are likely to reveal attitudes toward the Central Asians rather than their actual qualities. It is also occasionally reported that Central Asians are indifferent to disciplinary punishments. Their indifference could be a result of receiving more than their share of punishments from a primarily Slavic officer corps.

Central Asians can seldom qualify for specialist training in the military because they are poorly educated in comparison with most other Soviet peoples. Although the command reportedly does not discriminate against them officially, assignment to menial jobs on educational grounds results in lower pay and less rank. Lack of education also disqualifies most Central Asians for officer candidacy.

Bilingualism is significantly less common among Central Asians than among most other non-Russian minorities. A slight command of Russian may not seriously hamper performance on duty, since most orders use simple language. But broken Russian blocks promotion and hinders esprit de corps by isolating Central Asians from their fellow soldiers.

The eating and living habits of Central Asians reportedly are a frequent irritant to their relationship with Slavs. Central Asians assigned as military cooks because of their lack of education sometimes prepare a stew containing sheep's eyes, which they consider a delicacy. Slavic soldiers find it nauseating. Because of different cuisine and family life, the practice of billeting junior officers' families together in small apartments is unworkable when extended to colocating Central Asians with Slavs. Central Asian officers have consequently been excepted from sharing billets.

One who claimed that his unit's ethnic relations were relaxed also said that Central Asian conscripts were made to run errands for Slavic soldiers. In other cases strong leadership may smooth ethnic relations by creating a cohesion among the soldiers that transcends their ethnic prejudices.

Other ethnic groups bring traditional rivalries into the military.

Soviet authority tends to suspect persons of Jewish and German origins. Permission for Jews and Germans to emigrate has undoubtedly reinforced this suspicion by adding to concern about security. Reportedly Jews are now prohibited from officer schools, although their educational attainment entitles many to NCO positions or reserve commissions. The Soviet command may also have placed a hold on promotions for Jewish officers.

had not received further promotion

Some Germans report discrimination while others deny it, but it is generally agreed that Germans may not see classified material or enter officer schools.

Ethnic differences also complicate civil-military relations. Soldiers serving in Azerbaijan along the Iranian border were warned not to enter nearby villages because soldiers had been beaten there. Local women were strictly off limits. By contrast, a Ukrainian village invited soldiers stationed in the area to town dances. The common Slavic origin of the townspeople and most of the soldiers seems to have made the difference in this and similar cases.

Ethnic hostility mainly affects the Soviet military by exacerbating other morale and discipline problems. The enmity of the Finnish and Ruthenian population of Kandalaksha (south of Murmansk) isolated the officers of an infantry regiment stationed there and caused them to drink heavily. After an ethnic insult from his Slavic sergeant a Georgian ran amok in his barracks, killing 12 other soldiers. Anti-Semitic remarks from a Russian conscript started a brawl between 10 Russians and 10 Jews.

Relations Between Officers and Enlisted Men

call attention to the uneven performance of individual officers as a cause of indiscipline in

the ranks. According to *Communist of the Armed Forces* (no. 5, March 1976):

> It is known that some officers do not always succeed in maintaining the proper soldierly order and organizational conformity in their subunits. Most often this comes about because, while demanding exact fulfillment of regulations, orders, and instructions from subordinates, they themselves do not set an example.

As this statement implies, a mixed relationship prevails between Soviet officers and enlisted men.

Young Soviet officers tend to develop a close and informal contact with the ranks. Because most Soviet NCOs in the line of command are conscripts serving only 2 years, their inexperience compels junior officers to provide immediate supervision to enlisted men. While the resulting closeness probably increases an officer's concern for the welfare of his conscripts, the separation between officers and enlisted men conducive to strong discipline is absent, and disrespect may receive minimal or no punishment.

Disrespect for officers is observable in reports of brawls between officers and their subordinates which often do not lead to punishment for either party. For example, one sergeant reportedly assaulted a major who had scattered the sergeant's clothing display during a barracks inspection. The sergeant was not punished.

In some specialized units officers relax disciplinary standards either because of inadequate support from superiors or because of dependence upon the expertise of subordinates.

discipline was secondary to achievement of the construction plan. Officers and enlisted workers reached tacit agreements that military regulations would not be enforced as long as the work was done. One lieutenant who tried to enforce discipline faced repeated work stoppages until the commander, whose fulfillment of the plan was threatened, relieved the officer. The Soviet press generally gives little attention to discipline in military construction units, suggesting that the Construction Troops command is indifferent.

When officers must rely on conscripts' expertise the possibility of sabotage can preclude efforts to maintain discipline.

Relations Among Enlisted Men

The Soviets recognize that the arrival of inexperienced conscripts creates opportunities for abuse by second-year veterans. Older conscripts of all ranks bully new recruits and shift fatigue details to them. The cliques of second-year men protect each other in various ways.

first-year conscripts trying to slip over the fence were invariably caught. Second-year conscripts were able to pass because their fellow veterans on guard duty would ignore them.

The Soviet training system may encourage abuse of new conscripts by their older fellows. In the Navy, conscripts finishing their terms must often train replacements before leaving their ships. The desire of departing sailors to leave as soon as possible leads to a practice called the "bonka" at one base. Slow learners among the recruits are beaten on the stomach (where the marks are concealed beneath the uniform) "until they are black and blue." Officers ignore the bonka because it makes recruits study night and day to pass the exams. In a Border Guards post any second-year servicemen could mete out minor punishments to fresh recruits for disciplinary violations. As the

punishments included extra tours of duty along the border, second-year Border Guards were able to avoid standing guard by accusing recruits of indiscipline.

Most Soviet NCOs are second-year servicemen. When they join the lower ranking "old soldiers" in exploiting the new recruits, they are no longer perceived as fair superiors. The younger conscripts may react by ceasing to cooperate willingly. Thus the second-year soldiers' collusion may cause insubordination.

One Soviet writer, Major General D. Volkogonov, has recognized in *Soviet Soldier* (no. 12, June 1976) that relations among enlisted men tend to take shape from informal leaders who emerge apart from the rank structure.

> It sometimes happens that the "leader" in a squad or crew can be a man with negative characteristics which do not facilitate establishment of a healthy moral atmosphere. This is observed in conflict situations, in the appearance of such unhealthy phenomena as mutual covering-up, a false understanding of friendship and comradeship, and efforts to underline one's authority over juniors in impermissible fashion.

[redacted] conscripts normally mistrust each other because barracks thieves are common. Officers reportedly must guard the property of recruits at military reception centers because otherwise older enlisted men would steal the new conscripts' meagre belongings.

Alcoholism

Widespread in Soviet civilian society, alcoholism has roots beyond military control. The workings of the economic system militate against the success of official campaigns against drinking. Faced with planned sales which must be achieved, Soviet retail organizations find that increasing the number of liquor outlets makes the sales goals easier to meet. Vodka is also subject to an unusually high tax which contributes significantly to state revenues. According to the Soviet press, insufficient recreational programs for youths cause many to resort to liquor, which is more available because of the aforementioned economic advantages. When such youths are conscripted they bring alcohol habits into military service.

In 1974 the chief military prosecutor attested to the pervasiveness of alcoholism in the Soviet military by stating in *Red Star* that "more than a third of all violations are committed in an inebriated condition." Another measure of the Soviet command's concern about alcoholism is official exaggeration of its ill effects. A journal intended for enlisted readers stated that "even an insignificant quantity of spirits lowers the capacity for work by 25-30 percent." Incidents of drunkenness suggest that the command has reason to be concerned.

Evidence about alcohol abuse by pilots indicates the extent of drinking among Soviet officers. Pilots may serve as a test case because they are under close medical supervision, a deterrent to their drinking not applicable to other officers. At Kansk airbase the medical watch reportedly succeeded, but at Voronezh neither fines nor grounding stopped pilots from coming on duty drunk. Heavy drinking has been reported from at least four other airbases. A [redacted] most pilots in the Baltic Military District were intoxicated when they came to the annual medical examination. His statement lends some credence to a defector's assertion that Soviet pilots drink a daily average of 250 grams of vodka—a quarter of a bottle.

In an attempt to curb drinking among his officers, one commander tried to make them sign an affidavit that they had been warned of the consequences of alcoholism. He believed that the paper would enable him to dismiss from service any officer subsequently found drinking. But his officers refused to sign on the basis that the paper was an insult. *Red Star* criticized him for substituting paperwork for individual counseling of alcohol offenders.

Red Star's rejection of this method suggests that the Soviet command may be reluctant to dismiss drunken officers except as an extreme measure. *Red Star* quoted the commanding officer of a lieutenant expelled for drunkenness as saying that this action was "not the best way out of the situation." The lieutenant had already served 5 years despite a notation of "inclination to use of spirits" while he was still in commissioning school.

[redacted] officers' drinking was tolerated as long as it did not cause derelictions of duty. *Red Star* reported that this standard resulted in the dismissal of a political officer whose drinking had led him to commit "antipedagogical acts." Yet in other cases even this standard is relaxed. The commander of an engineer battalion [redacted] often had to be carried back to his quarters from duty because of drunkenness, [redacted]

Reluctance to dismiss alcoholic officers may result from the overall officer shortage and the fear that a policy of releasing such officers might encourage drinking. Officers at a National Air Defense Forces missile site in [redacted] reportedly drank more as their 6-year tour of duty wore on at the isolated garrison 40 kilometers from the nearest town. Nevertheless, few escaped their total obligation of 25 years.[3]

Alcohol is entirely forbidden to conscripts, but this rule also is not enforced strictly. Even in an air defense artillery unit said to have strong discipline, excellent morale, and high proficiency, the officers overlooked conscripts' drinking as long as it was discreet. Conscripts in two motor transport battalions were allowed liquor as long as they confined their drinking to weekends, when they did not have to drive.

Soviet officers reportedly ignore intoxicated conscripts in order to protect their own records, as too many disciplinary violations by subordinates can lower a Soviet officer's fitness rating. Imposition of punishment must be recorded. Now that the revised regulations permit an officer to confine a drunken conscript up to 24 hours to sober up without recording this confinement, it may be the only punishment in most cases of conscript drinking.

While the Soviets probably expect the isolation of most garrisons to limit conscripts' access to alcohol, soldiers are ingenious and unselective in the search for liquor. One conscript received vodka in the mail from his mother. Aboard a submarine tender the sailors brewed their own beer and used gas mask filters to extract alcohol from hydraulic fluid. They also mixed an aftershave with egg yolks to remove impurities and strained the mixture through gas masks. [redacted] The soldiers of a construction battalion distilled varnish and drank the result. Personnel at several airbases drank fluids from aircraft, and several were reportedly blinded temporarily when the command tried to stop this practice by using methyl alcohol in the airplanes.

Drug Abuse

Drug abuse seems significantly less widespread in the Soviet military than alcoholism. [redacted]

[redacted]

In various forms known as *plan* or *anasha*, cannabis appears to be the most commonly abused drug. It may originate primarily in the Islamic areas around the Black, Caspian, and Aral Seas. [redacted] conscripts from these areas smuggle cannabis as far as East Germany or receive it in packages from home. The traditional use of hashish in Central Asia makes these claims credible.

Information as old as 1966 showed that some enlisted men prepared a narcotic extract of tea called *chefir* as a substitute for alcohol because tea was legal, readily available, and cheap.

No cases of officer drug abuse have been reported.

Desertion and Absence Without Leave

Only one piece of evidence provides a benchmark for estimating the Soviet military desertion rate. A [redacted] claimed to have analyzed a book assigned in commissioning school. The book detailed 2,000 attempted escapes across the Soviet border during 1965. Soviet military personnel other than Border Guards had committed 500 of these attempts; Border Guards had made 200 attempts. The figure of 500 military desertions during 1965 is a minimum, because it excludes deserters who were caught before reaching the border, who did not try to leave the USSR, who deserted from units outside the Soviet Union, who escaped without notice, or whose desertions were misclassified as absences without leave.

[redacted] 300 of the military deserters were officers. If correct, this statistic raises serious questions about the political commitment of the Soviet officer corps. Although the proportion of officers to enlisted men would appear to be unusually high, it seems clear that officers do compose a surprising proportion of Soviet deserters. [redacted]

The following table gives information about the sample of Soviet deserters. The first row gives the total number of known deserters in the officer and enlisted

[3] The standard obligation for graduates of Soviet officer commissioning schools is 25 years, counted from the date of entry into commissioning school. Those officers who are not promoted past captain usually serve less than the full obligation because they reach the age limit for junior officers at 40, only 23 years after the earliest age for entry into commissioning school.

categories (for convenience, one warrant officer has been included under "officers"). The other rows provide breakdowns on information about deserters. These rows do not include the total number of deserters because the information is not known for every case.

Known Soviet Desertions, 1967-1976

	Enlisted Men	Officers	Total
Total	48	14	62
Attempts to defect	6	11	17
Time of year			
Summer	28	7	35
Winter	6	4	10
	34	11	45
Armed			
Yes	17	3	20
No	7	2	9
	24	5	29

This sample suggests that Soviet officers are more likely than enlisted men to try to defect after deserting. Eleven officers among the 17 deserters are known to have attempted to escape the USSR.

A deserting Soviet officer cannot expect to find a job in the USSR of comparable status and pay to his military position without being checked by the police, a process sure to lead to arrest. By contrast, almost any Soviet industrial job is preferable to a conscript's situation, and the tight labor market in the USSR makes factories willing to hire without asking questions. Although controls on personal documents in the USSR would logically inhibit desertions, conscripts apparently believe that they can either obtain false documents or escape official attention.

The defection of a MIG-25 pilot who flew to Japan in September 1976 poses serious problems for the Soviets but may not be a definite indicator of military morale and discipline. His desertion with the most advanced Soviet aircraft compromises secret equipment and will compel the Soviets to modify instruments throughout their Air Forces (e.g., electronics equipment installed in aircraft for identification of friend or foe, which the Soviets must assume is now subject to deception). Although the pilot has testified that toadyism was a problem in one unit where he served and that he clashed with the commander of his MIG-25 regiment, it is unclear whether he is providing an objective perception of attitudes in these units. His defection does show that in peacetime morale problems, even if confined to individuals, can harm Soviet military interests.

Desertions by enlisted men tend to occur in the summer when the soldier can live off the land. Of the 34 desertions for which a date could be identified, 28 occurred during the months of April through September.

Surprisingly, controls on movement in Eastern Europe may not be as tight as they appear from the outside. Two Soviet deserters arrested in Czechoslovakia belonged to units in East Germany. In 1971 the Soviets reportedly accused Czechoslovak civilians of abetting Soviet deserters, which may account for the apparent case of movement across East European borders.

Soldiers desert for a variety of reasons. Two soldiers from an infantry regiment in the Far East Military District deserted when their commander refused to do anything about their complaints of harassment by second-year conscripts. A private who walked 40 kilometers across East Germany to the West German border said that he deserted because he thought officers were assigning him too many petty details. Another conscript reportedly hitchhiked from Nakhodka, an isolated outpost on the Pacific Ocean, to his hometown of Vladivostok to see his wife. An officer reportedly deserted after he was court-martialed for a civil offense. Frequent reports of violence accompanying desertion suggest that desertions occur because of frustration. Drunkenness is sometimes a contributing factor, since it weakens the soldier's inhibitions against the crime of desertion and also may make him miscalculate the risk involved.

It is standard Soviet procedure to organize searches for deserters. Travelers in East Germany have observed search parties of Soviet troops. Two armed deserters in the Far East Military District were tracked down with dogs and helicopters, and one was killed when he resisted capture. His death created a scandal which reportedly resulted in the relief of many officers of his regiment.

To avoid unfavorable notice at higher levels Soviet commanders may misrepresent some desertions as

absences without leave (AWOL). One sergeant made three attempts to defect. The first two were classed as AWOL and he remained on duty. After the third attempt he was sentenced to 5 years in a labor camp for "being AWOL in East Germany," not for desertion per se. Two deserters who left an infantry training regiment received only reprimands when they were caught. Because they had deserted before taking the military oath (which is administered at the close of basic training), their absence was not considered desertion. AWOL does not demand judicial punishment, is not entered in personal or unit records, and is not detrimental to chances for promotion.

The confinement of Soviet conscripts to garrison, except for occasional brief leaves, tends to increase the frequency of AWOL. Because of this confinement AWOL is almost prerequisite for acquiring alcohol and drugs or for dealing in the black market. The prevalence of alcoholism and black marketeering lends credibility to the report of an emigre who reported that for every AWOL detected by the officers of his unit, nine were undiscovered. Another emigre reported that his regiment never sentenced AWOL conscripts to the disciplinary battalion because if it had, the strength of the regiment could not have been maintained. Probably most of these absences are brief and take place during off-duty hours, however.

Suicide

To the extent that alcoholism, drug abuse, and desertion represent attempts to escape a situation perceived by the Soviet soldier as intolerable, in their extreme form these attempts could extend to suicide. Sixteen reports over the past 10 years have been found which include the three factors needed to calculate a suicide rate for the Soviet military (size of unit, number of suicides, and period of time).

A tabulation of the known data in the 16 cases would indicate a suicide rate of 1.5 suicides per thousand servicemen per year (see table). A rate such as this is unusually high and would indicate serious deficiencies in Soviet military morale. A former Soviet has made an estimate that the Soviet civilian suicide rate (a state secret) is less than .17 per thousand per year, within the normal range for civilian rates in other countries but a ninth of the rate implied for military personnel by the reports. Although the sample is small, and there may be bias in the reporting, the overall Soviet military suicide rate appears significantly higher than normal civilian rates. The firmest conclusion justified by the data is that some Soviet units at some times have shown unusually high rates of suicide.

Known Suicides in Soviet Military Units

Unit Strength*	Number of Suicides	Time Period (Years)	Rate: Suicides/ 1,000/Year
2,000	0	2.0	0.00
441	2	2.0	2.27
2,000	7	2.0	1.75
410	2	2.0	2.44
525	1	2.0	0.95
1,000	8	2.0	4.00
230	2	2.0	4.35
1,800	2	1.0	1.11
1,600	1	2.0	0.31
1,100	2	2.0	0.91
2,100	3	2.0	0.71
1,200	0	2.0	0.00
1,400	5	2.0	1.52
300	0	2.0	0.00
1,000	2	1.0	2.00
900	4	2.0	2.22
Average			1.53

Black Markets, Theft, and Corruption

Black markets are endemic in the Soviet Union because the production of consumer goods is restricted and the industrial supply system often fails. The casual attitude toward corruption engendered by black markets extends to the Soviet military. Twenty-five percent of the cases handled by the Soviet military prosecutor for the Southern Group of Forces (Hungary) in 1968 concerned petty larceny. In these cases involvement of Soviet soldiers with Hungarian nationals suggests that the purpose of the stealing was to supply the local black market.

The most common items that servicemen offer on the black market seem to be parts of uniforms. In one motorized rifle training unit coveralls were rarely available because they could be sold to civilians. The supply sergeant of an air defense radar station organized regular sales of departing conscripts' uniforms to local civilians. It is often reported that conscripts barter boots, shirts, jackets, and trousers to peasants in return for *samogon*, the Russian moonshine. Often they have stolen these items from each other, a habit that sows mistrust among conscripts.

Other common black market commodities are truck parts and gasoline. In a chemical decontamination battalion, conscripts would steal carburetors and tires from the unit's vehicles in order to earn money to buy drugs. In a rear services transport unit, drivers habitually cannibalized trucks of the "untouchable reserve" to keep their assigned vehicles operational, and also stole parts to sell to civilians. The thieves were seldom caught because they were released from service before investigators uncovered the guilty persons. A sergeant's carelessness while draining gasoline from ammunition trucks with the intent to sell it on the black market allegedly led to an explosion and fire in a garage of a tank regiment in the Group of Soviet Forces in Germany.

Food may be another commonly stolen item. Officers in the supply section of an infantry training unit were rumored to divert meat intended for the conscripts to themselves and the cooks as well as to the black market. Conscripts serving in a reconnaissance battalion along the Chinese border stole food from state and collective farms to supplement their meagre diet.

Inconsistent enforcement of the severe penalties for embezzling state property may encourage corruption. *Red Star* reported the case of a colonel who took kickbacks from consultants to the academic department of which he was chairman. When discovered, he returned the money to the school. The party organization of the school consequently reduced what was to be a severe reprimand to a simple reprimand. Afterwards he even ordered his subordinates to nominate him as a "Meritorious Scientist of the Ukraine."

Officers can also take advantage of the practice (known as *shefstvo*) of lending military personnel to civilian factories and farms which are short of manpower. One officer earned 90 rubles by ordering his soldiers to unload civilian freight from some railroad cars. *Shefstvo* is widely practiced in the Soviet military, normally at the behest of local Communist Party officials. It provides convincing cover for earning some extra money on the side.

Military commissariats—the local draft boards—evidently are targets of bribes offered for irregular deferments. *Red Star* editorials pertaining to draft calls regularly criticize certain military commissariats for granting improper deferments, some of which probably are bought. The chief of the commissariat in a small town near Frunze was removed and sentenced to prison in 1972 for accepting bribes.

Misuse of Weapons

New regulations for storage of arms highlight apparently persistent theft and unauthorized use of arms. The new rules introduced in the fall of 1975 require electroacoustical alarms for all arms rooms, the keys to which duty officers must keep on their persons at all times.

Thefts of arms and ammunition by deserting servicemen may have prompted these changes. At least 20 of the 62 known deserters were armed, although some left while in legitimate possession of weapons for guard duty. Furthermore, theft of military arms by civilians has recently been reported. Opponents of the first secretary of the Georgian SSR, who is battling crime and corruption in the republic, reportedly stole weapons and explosives from a military base near the capital city of Tbilisi in early June 1976.

Unauthorized use of arms also results from having officers carry sidearms on duty, as required for guard patrol commanders and duty officers in the revised regulations. When an officer is drunk or when the frustrations of service at isolated posts become unbearable, the availability of a weapon has led to murder. In one incident the commander of an NCO school was rumored to have shot two of his deputies and then himself in 1969.

In the past the Soviets may not have maintained tight control of ammunition. guards never had to account for their ammunition issue and would use it to shoot rabbits. If weapons have also not been carefully accounted for—and the revised regulations suggest they have not—free access to ammunition may have contributed to reported violence by conscripts.

Constraints on Improvement of Morale and Discipline

Many of the Soviet armed forces' morale and discipline problems originate beyond military control. Alcoholism, black markets, drug abuse, ethnic hostility, political disaffection, and misuse of authority are deeply rooted in Soviet civilian life. As long as the military inducts young civilians without applying stricter standards of personal conduct, these problems will continue to flood the armed forces from the

outside. Soviet military spokesmen often justify universal military service as a final tempering for the conscripts' future. This justification assumes, however, that the military can overcome the faults that the young conscripts bring to the service. It seems more likely that military service worsens these faults.

The Soviet military's own bureaucracy inhibits its efforts to improve morale and discipline. Logically, officers whose ratings depend in part on the disciplinary records of their commands are unlikely to make the self-sacrifice of communicating the true situation to their superiors. Concealment of desertions, of drunkenness, and of maltreatment of trainees prove that the logical probability is a frequent reality. Many Soviet garrisons become Potemkin villages, a facade of military order hiding indiscipline.

The Political Officer's Role

In the official Soviet view, exhortation of the conscript to recognize his socialist obligations is the preferred means of maintaining morale and discipline. As the political officer is in charge of indoctrinating conscripts, he shares in the commander's responsibility for morale and discipline.

Most conscripts clearly find political indoctrination boring, repetitious, and unconvincing. This casual estimate may correspond roughly to the true proportions. Political training is said to bore conscripts even in units with strong discipline and high proficiency.

While indoctrination is unlikely to strengthen morale, the respect earned by some political officers can. despite boring political lectures, the political officer was admired for his sincerity. A young political officer fresh from commissioning school made the first sergeant of a radar station stop forcing enlisted men to fence stolen military property. This kind of conduct can win respect for political officers, whose effectiveness, according to the new Soviet Minister of Defense, Marshal D. F. Ustinov, depends on a "close, not formalistic relationship with the personnel."

The Soviet command holds political officers accountable for morale and discipline. According to Chief Military Prosecutor Gornyy, political officers share with "representatives of the staffs" and military prosecutors the responsibility "for investigation of the causes of violations and for rendering practical assistance on the spot for their extirpation." After a series of thefts from a military store, the political officer of a signal battalion was called several times to a higher staff to account for his ineffectiveness in political training.

Subordinates also hold the political officer accountable. Complaints can be communicated through the independent reporting channel of the political staffs. While risky—the political officer may be unsympathetic, or if the complaint is considered unjustified, it may result in a reprimand—the channel offers redress against improper use of authority.

At the same time the political officer exercises "party verification" in the Soviet military. This is the duty to report failures to execute orders or to follow regulations. Using the right of verification, the same political officer who ended the black marketeering of the radar station's first sergeant also obtained the relief of the captain in command for allowing discipline to deteriorate. However, to combine responsibility for reporting indiscipline with accountability for violations places the political officer in the same quandary as a regular officer. The political officer's career also depends on maintaining the appearance of order, a circumstance that has undermined party verification in the Soviet military.

Punishments

Despite the Soviet military's reputation for harsh punishment, the means available to preserve discipline in peacetime are weak.

The first recourse of Soviet commanders in punishing indiscipline is the use of peer pressure. Soldiers who commit violations can be criticized before meetings of the full unit at the commander's option. In some units this procedure obviously works. all the disciplinary violations seemed to be committed by the same 10 or so persons, whom the rest of the soldiers looked down on.

Soviet commanders also have the option of ridiculing offenders in unit newspapers. Aboard one ship the commander ordered the preparation of criticisms and satirical drawings of two repeated offenders for the "combat sheet" (apparently a pamphlet circulated to the crew) and further criticism in the ship's wall newspaper. Finally the Komsomol (Communist Youth League) held a meeting to criticize the two sailors. All the harassment, if the journal *Naval Digest* is to be believed, made the sailors correct their misbehavior.

Senior commanders also use the Komsomol, to which some 90 percent of Soviet conscripts are said to belong, to bring pressure on violators. *Naval Digest* laments, however, that "not all commanders . . . have learned to rely on Komsomol organizations" in strengthening discipline.

A commander may convene a "comrades' court" consisting of his NCOs or warrant officers to adjudge violations by servicemen in those ranks. Once the comrades' court has passed judgment, no further proceedings can be instituted. In a training regiment the commander reportedly used the comrades' courts to protect his trainers who beat slow learners. The commander would call a comrades' court, pronounce a nominal sentence, and thus preclude further prosecution.

A Soviet policy of transfers to rehabilitate chronic offenders also relies on peer pressure. On 15 May 1976, *Red Star* printed an account of an "inveterate violator of military discipline" transferred to a well-disciplined construction battalion who immediately went AWOL and returned to the barracks drunk. Proud of a perfect unit record, the other enlisted men reportedly shamed their new comrade and arranged for him to be accompanied whenever he left the unit area. According to *Red Star*, by the time he left the service the soldier had completely reformed. *Red Star's* publication of such an article indicates that the command recommends this method.

A corollary of invoking peer pressure against disciplinary offenders is the attitude that individual violations are the fault of the collective. A Main Political Directorate deputy for agitation and propaganda, Major General D. Volkogonov, attested to this attitude in *Soviet Soldier* for June 1976:

> In the examination of the act of a violator of discipline and of the moral norm, it is wrong to accentuate only that "the collective was short-sighted," "the Komsomol did not indoctrinate," "the comrades influenced weakly," etc. In this case, involuntarily the violator appears only as "a victim of omissions by society."

These formulas can undermine discipline by spreading the responsibility for a unit's record from the commander to the entire complement. They also constitute self-criticism, an officially approved panacea which can preempt criticism or reprimand from above.

In *Red Star* on 15 April 1976, Major General A. Volkov discussed another way that reliance on peer pressure can subvert discipline. According to Volkov, Soviet commanders sometimes use collective punishment to stimulate peer pressure. Volkov gives the example of a small-unit commander who restricted all his men to garrison for a full month after one soldier delayed his return from a pass. As Volkov points out, collective punishment encourages soldiers to conceal each other's violations and discourages conscientious service by making no distinction between good soldiers and bad. Volkov decries the use of punishments "not provided in the regulations."

The next step on the ladder of punishments is a sentence in the guardhouse. However, confinement is often ineffective. In 1975, discussion in Soviet military journals of the new disciplinary regulations alluded to inconsistent imposition of hard labor and said that as a result confinement lost its "instructive effect." Soviet barracks life is so hard that soldiers sometimes consider a stint in the guardhouse like a holiday. One NCO who lost his temper with an inept lieutenant was sent to the guardhouse for insulting the officer. His life there was so relaxed that he insulted the lieutenant again in order to be resentenced.

[redacted] military guardhouses more often may be extremely harsh places with bread and water rations, sleeping facilities "like a table," and frequent physical abuse. Nevertheless, he noted that for five of the 101 men [redacted] the guardhouse was "their own home" where they spent as many as 200 days of their 2-year conscription term.

For serious crimes, military tribunals can sentence a conscript to as long as 2 years in a disciplinary battalion, one of which is found in each Soviet military district. The sentences are normally "bad time"; i.e., when released the conscript must finish his military obligation. The regulations do provide that if his service in the disciplinary battalion is irreproachable, he may be released into the reserves immediately. The military tribunals can also sentence servicemen to civilian prisons and labor camps for major crimes such as murder and serious traffic accidents.

Recognizing the insufficiency of authorized punishments, Chief Military Prosecutor Gornyy told [redacted] that the Soviets intended to intensify punishment for disciplinary violations. Presumably Gornyy meant that the existing penalties would be enforced more strictly. The new disciplinary regulations issued in the fall of that year did not expand disciplinary powers for commanders and, in

fact, reduced the length of sentences that some commanders could impose.

Inertia among middle-ranking officers and their desire to protect themselves contribute to the inefficacy of Soviet disciplinary measures. In *Red Star* on 1 November 1974 Gornyy wrote:

> Many violations have developed gradually [and the lack of] a commensurate reaction from responsible persons . . . in the final analysis has led to the growth of minor violations into crimes.

He also noted "the tendency of some leaders to hide the true state of affairs in units subordinate to them."

On 24 October 1976, during a campaign to correct officers' shortcomings, *Red Star* published an article by Gornyy which dwelt at length on concealment of indiscipline. Noting that the regulations obligated Soviet commanders to leave no disciplinary violation unpunished, he wrote:

> Here one cannot remain silent about individual commanders' disregard for these principles of the regulations. In an effort to embellish the real disciplinary situation in the unit or ship entrusted to them, such comrades cover up negative occurrences. Thereby they deprive themselves and senior commanders of the opportunity to thoroughly investigate the circumstances of what has happened, to clarify the real causes and the conditions that have contributed to the violation of law and regulation, and to get rid of them.

One of Gornyy's subordinates explained in another *Red Star* article, on 1 August 1976, why these concealments occur: commanders do not report their subordinates' violations "to spare themselves possible reproaches from higher commanders for the unsatisfactory condition of military discipline." The author mentions a sergeant's violation which resulted in a reprimand for his battalion commander, a strict reprimand for the deputy commander for political matters, and a " warning of incomplete execution of duty" for the battalion chief of staff.

The desire to avoid reporting violations often leads junior and middle-ranking officers to punish disciplinary violations with the means available in their own units. If an officer remains within the disciplinary authority allotted to his rank, serious violations will be treated too leniently. On the other hand, the insufficiency of disciplinary powers may be responsible for another of Gornyy's recommendations in 1974 calling for "an active struggle . . . against instances of application of punishments beyond the limits of the law." According to a senior lieutenant writing in *Military Herald* in April 1976, "some trainers, especially young ones, often complain that the powers granted to them to impose punishment are insufficient." This feeling caused the officers of one unit to resort illegally to beating some conscripts, especially Central Asians whose poor command of Russian made them slow to respond to orders.

According to Gornyy, however, the consequence of concealment is "a feeling of impunity" among violators. Reports of violations without any retribution suggest that the dilemma posed by the consequences of honest reporting is often resolved by ignoring the offense. At the regimental level it would be difficult for a junior officer to punish a subordinate without his superior's knowledge.

Finally, Gornyy notes that the same incentives affect more senior commanders. He cites a colonel who blocked an investigation by the military prosecutor, apparently successfully, as no punishment is recorded. [redacted] Soviet officer, has provided an explanation for such actions. He postulates a hypothetical case in which a soldier runs amok with an automatic rifle. The ramifications of such an incident would include the transfer of the corps commander and his deputy for political affairs as well as the dismissal of the battalion commander and his political deputy; even the army commander might be removed. Under these circumstances serious disciplinary violations may often require the intervention of very senior Soviet commanders. SRF commander General Tolubko's attendance at a party meeting in the Siberian Military District in December 1976 appears to be an example. A disciplinary system dependent on such high-level intervention in routine cases will operate unevenly.

More forcible punishment is available to officers "in a combat situation." The disciplinary regulations require officers to enforce instant obedience by all means including "the application of weapons." This euphemism's practical meaning was repeatedly observed during the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. One purported eyewitness said that when the lead tank in a Soviet column stopped because a Czechoslovak crowd was blocking the road, the officer commanding the column walked forward and shot the tank commander. A Czechoslovak official claimed that five shootings for insubordination had taken place near Prague on 6 November 1968. Eight Soviet soldiers reportedly were executed by a firing squad after a 4-day mutiny near Zatec. Some of these stories probably are exaggerated, but their recurrence, the

wording of the regulation, and the testimony of Soviet soldiers leave no doubt that Soviet officers can resort to summary execution in wartime.

The effect of such brutal discipline is uncertain. Soldiers may be cowed, but they may also answer in kind. It was reported that a friend of one Soviet conscript executed in Czechoslovakia immediately shot the officer responsible. Summary retribution is inconsistent with the initiative that the Soviets say modern battle requires, and it is readily abused.

Outlook

New Soviet Defense Minister D. F. Ustinov, a civilian appointed in April 1976 after Marshal A. A. Grechko died, is attacking the bureaucratic habits that inhibit improvement of morale and discipline. On 6 and 7 July 1976, Ustinov and Army General A. A. Yepishev, long-time chief of the Main Political Directorate, addressed a conference of "leading political workers" attended by most deputy ministers as well as senior political officers. *Red Star's* report of their speeches laid unusual stress on party verification, which obligates political officers to report failures to obey orders or to abide by regulations. In particular, Yepishev said that "verification of implementation of the Defense Minister's orders" should become "more strict." Ustinov demanded that political officers become more specific and "combative" in reporting deficient execution of orders by the military bureaucracy. By invoking party verification Ustinov threatens military officers, with whose performance both he and his predecessor, Marshal Grechko, indicated dissatisfaction during 1976, with an increased likelihood that their failures will be punished.

Ustinov's moves differ from previous high-level involvement in discipline problems. He has taken an organized approach as opposed to the pattern of ad hoc reactions to isolated violations. The series of meetings proves that Ustinov's initiative has drawn the attention of senior Soviet commanders to discipline for the time being. But if bureaucratic inertia is in fact an important reason for the Soviet military's inability to maintain discipline, sustained attention from senior commanders will be necessary to improve discipline. As the command gives its recent actions time to take effect, its attention will inevitably be diverted to other pressing questions. Furthermore, no information indicates that the Soviets have found satisfactory solutions to morale and discipline problems.[4]

Conclusions

The evidence in this memorandum is subject to differing interpretations. In a military establishment with 4.5 million members, some individuals inevitably will violate discipline and show poor morale. The data do not permit ready measurement of the proportion of such individuals in the Soviet military. Furthermore, the relationship between morale, discipline, and military effectiveness is uncertain. Too much importance should not be attributed to Soviet morale and discipline problems.

At the same time, the incidence of suicide and alcoholism and the high proportion of officers among deserters tend to support a conclusion that Soviet military morale and discipline problems are serious. The MIG-25 defection and the *Storozhevoy* mutiny also seem to support such a conclusion, especially since these cases involve first-line Soviet units. Complex weapon systems like the MIG-25 and the *Storozhevoy* require crews chosen for proficiency. Recognition of proficiency commonly raises morale, yet even some members of these first-line units have morale inadequate to guarantee their reliability. Soviet efforts to instill political dedication as a means of maintaining morale have clearly failed in these cases. Furthermore, low morale in such units, even when confined to individuals, can have serious consequences for Soviet military interests.

Although close attention from senior commanders may reduce the rate of discipline violations, Soviet military morale shows little prospect of improving. Each new draft of Soviet youths brings similar problems from civilian life to the military. By their own account, most Soviet youths are reluctant to enter the army. Any future rise in Soviet living standards is likely to make military service even less appealing. Abuse by older conscripts and indifferent leadership from junior officers intensify the recruits' aversion to the service. Unless the Soviet military can find new solutions, the discipline problems that result from poor morale are likely to continue. Increased command attention is subject to diminishing returns and has another drawback in that any improvements achieved

[4] The new regulations may include some new solutions to discipline problems.

this way will come at the expense of other goals. For example, Soviet military writers recognize that constant tutelage by senior officers tends to deprive subordinates of initiative.

Strikingly, the Soviet military is experiencing these morale and discipline problems in peacetime. It is not external pressure, such as an unpopular war, that accounts for poor morale in the Soviet armed forces. It is instead the harsh internal pressure of the Soviet system, reinforced by involuntary service in a conscript military. To relieve this pressure would require systemic change; to suppress the effects would require a return to an even harsher oppression. The Soviet leadership has been unwilling to take either course. Furthermore, if morale and discipline are problematic in peacetime, the added effect of possible Soviet involvement in an unpopular war is even more difficult to assess. Lapses in morale and discipline must make the Soviet leaders themselves uncertain about the reliability of their armed forces.